



The Faithful Steward

A Newsletter of the Holy Orthodox Church in North America

"We are all called to be faithful and wise stewards, ever waiting for the coming of our Lord ." LUKE 12:40-46

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy

Excerpts from the Sixth Homily in *Ten Homilies on the Beatitudes*

St. John of Kronstadt

Translated by Professor N. Kizenko-Frugier

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The Lord says, *Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.* What do sinful people need most of all? They need God's mercy to manifest itself in not demanding from us according to our sins. They need God's forbearance, which gives us enough time for repentance. They need their own souls' impulse towards repentance, they need forgiveness of sins, and, finally, they need mercy at God's Dread Judgment. This is why the Church says so often in our name, "Lord, have mercy!"

Fellow sinners! If you have already acknowledged yourselves to be the greatest sinners, worthy of every censure and torment, if you have known the vileness and the absurdity of sins, if you sense how immeasurably you offend the Lord God through them, if you feel your

great responsibility for them, if you hunger and thirst for God's justifi-

ters, you will yourself receive mercy from God. For a fleeting mercy you will receive eternal mercy; for a small act of mercy you will receive an immeasurably great mercy. Not only will you be shown mercy from eternal condemnation at God's judgment, but you will also receive eternal beatitude.

Everyone can easily show mercy to those around him, because mercy is diverse, just as a person's needs are different, just as people's rank and calling in society are different. The head of an organization can show mercy through patience, through lenience towards those who sin, and through rewarding the mer-



cation and mercy, then try to show all the mercy you can to those around you: *Blessed are the merciful,* says the Lord, *for they shall obtain mercy.* Because of the mercy you show to your brothers and sis-

its of his or her subordinates. In turn, the subordinate can show mercy by being punctilious, obedient, and diligent. Learned people can show mercy to their neighbors by enlightening the ignorant; by

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articulating and spreading the right opinions about life, faith, the goal of people's being on earth, earthly blessings, death, God's righteousness, and the eternal judgment; or, conversely, by condemning social vices. Rich people can show mercy to their neighbors by donating to the needs of the church and its servants, to charitable organizations, or by giving generous alms to the poor. Poor people can show mercy through their gratitude and eagerness to serve the wealthy, and by praying for their benefactors. The pastor can show mercy by his sincere and constant attention to saving people's souls, by instructing them in God's word, by constant readiness to carry out parishioners' requests for services,* and by counsel, advice, and consolation. The flock can show its mercy by deference, respect, and gratitude to their pastors, by tolerance for their shortcomings, and by earnest prayer for them.

The most important works of *physical* mercy which everyone can show are the following:

- 1) feeding the hungry,
- 2) giving the thirsty drink,
- 3) dressing those who lack necessary and decent clothing,
- 4) visiting people in prison,
- 5) visiting the sick, serving them, and aiding their recovery, or helping to prepare them for a Christian end by calling a priest to give them confession and communion of Christ's Holy Mysteries,
- 6) taking travelers into one's house and caring for them, and
- 7) burying those who die in poverty at one's own expense or with donations gathered for this purpose.

The Lord Himself reminds us of all these deeds of mercy, except for the last, in His depiction of His last Dread Judgment. Here are His words: *When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. The king will say to those on right, "You have my Father's blessing; come, take possession of the kingdom that has been ready for you since the world was made. For when I was hungry, you gave me food; when I was thirsty, you gave me drink; when I was a stranger, you took me into your home; when naked, you clothed me; when I was ill, you came to my help; when in prison, you visited me"* (Matthew 25:31-36).

From these words of the Lord you see, brothers, how necessary and infinitely important Christian mercy is to us. It is necessary because without acts of mercy we cannot inherit the kingdom of the heavenly Father prepared for the blessed from the time the world was created, and *in that judgment there will be no mercy for the person who has shown none* (James 2:13). It is infinitely important because the mercy we show to our neighbor we show to Jesus Christ Himself, according to His own testimony: *anything you did for one of my brothers here, however insignificant, you did for me* (Matthew 25:40). All people, especially Christians, are His younger brothers and sisters, and Christians are the members of His body.

Spiritual acts of mercy include the following:

- 1) Converting the sinner from error through admonishment. This can mean the unbeliever, the non-Orthodox Christian, the schismatic, or a drunkard, an adulterer, someone who is spendthrift, and so on.
- 2) Instructing the ignorant in truth and good. This can mean teaching someone to pray, or instructing someone who does not know God's commandments in those commandments and in how to fulfill them.
- 3) Giving one's neighbor good advice at the right moment, whether he is going through a bad time, or is in some danger which he does not notice—if he is sick, for example, or if he has evil plans for someone's life or well-being.
- 4) Praying to God for everyone: *Pray for one another, that you may be healed*, says the Apostle (James 5:16).

5) Consoling the sorrowing: *Encourage the faint-hearted*, says the Apostle (I Thessalonians 5:14).

6) Not revenging or seeking requital for the evil which people did to you. *Never pay back evil for evil* (Romans 12:17), or *abuse with abuse* (I Peter 3:9); *Do not seek revenge, but leave a place for divine retribution* (Romans 12:19).

7) Forgiving wrongdoing from the bottom of your heart, knowing and remembering that the person who wrongs another wrongs himself above all, bringing down the great wrath of God upon himself. Remember that he wrongs because of the instigation of the enemy, that we deserve injuries because of our sins, and, finally, that God forgives us the sins and insults we cause His greatness.

*Treby, the term St. John uses here, refers to such extra-liturgical services as *molebens* and *panikhidas*.

The Ministry of the Deacon

By Protodeacon Photios Touloumes

The ministry of the deacon is based on the ministry which Christ performed for us. This ministry is one of service and was expressed by Christ with these words: "I am among you as one who serves." With these words Christ reversed the order of things, for He who is higher than the heavens became a servant for our salvation. The master becomes a servant and makes service to others the path to salvation. "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you; but whosoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whosoever would be first among you must be your slave; even as the Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many."

Because, therefore, service unto others is the content of Christ's life it must be the same for all Christians.

Service is the basis of Christian spirituality for it is by our unselfish and obedient service to others—with all the suffering and humiliation that this implies—that we participate in the divine life of God.

This ministry of service was left as a legacy to the Church and is bestowed creatively by the Holy Spirit—not only as the sign and duty of the Church, but also as the basis of our unity in the Church. This legacy carries with it the power to sustain sonship in the Kingdom of God now and was given as a gift for the salvation of man. But even though service is our inheritance as Christians, Christ also set aside individuals in whom this service is made personal as a duty performed for the Church and in whom this service is a specific ministry given by God. In these individuals, who constitute the official ministry of the holy priesthood (bishop, priest, and deacon), the ministry of the Church is extended to its members in organised worship and mutual assistance, as well as to the mission of the Church and Her service of witness in the world.

The Apostles were the first to receive this mandate of service from Christ and they in turn set up an official priesthood to insure its continuation in the Church. They appointed the first bishops and deacons so that Christ's ministry might be extended and maintained for the salvation of all men.

THE DIACONATE

In what we have said above, the words service, servant and ministry can be substituted by the words deacon or diaconate. Scripture uses these words in this way. Literally, deacon means servant or waiter. Very early in the Church, as recorded in Acts, the words deacon and diaconate came to be used as the designation of a specific office, part of the official ministry of the Church. The Book of Acts tells us that, with the expansion of the Church, the Apostles were unable to perform all that was required of them as travelling ministers of the Word. They appointed bishops to preside over the Christian communities so that they might continue their preaching. Deacons were also chosen from among the faithful to assist in the work of the Church and as co-workers with the bishops.

Originally, seven deacons were chosen and their duties were twofold. First they had the responsibility of gathering the food and other goods which the faithful brought to the Church as an offering, and of distributing it to the needy whom the Church supported. It was also the duty of the deacons to prepare for the Eucharistic gatherings and the common meals in which the whole Church participated. Consequently, the deacon's role was both to extend the Church's charity to those who required it and to lead the people in the liturgical gatherings.

This idea of serving at tables influenced both the clothes and the comparison to angels which were early



Protodeacon Photios beside the icon of St. Tatiana

attached to the deacon. Many writers compared the deacons to the angels for just as the angels serve God, deacons serve the heavenly banquet of the holy Church. Because of this, the deacon's stole (orarion) is often compared to the wings of the angels. So too the deacon's stole is often stamped with the words: Holy, Holy, Holy—the hymn which the angels sing as they surround the throne of God.

In his ministry of charity, the deacon acted as a social worker, moving among the people so as to understand their needs and bring these needs to the bishop's attention for solution. In the third century the Church in Rome supported 1,500 widows and needy, while in Alexandria, in the fourth century, 3,000 needy were fed daily by the Church. The deacon visited the sick and imprisoned, cared for the demoniacs, and took Communion to those who were absent from the Eucharistic gatherings. Eventually the deacons also taught and preached the Holy Gospel. In all these actions, he acted in behalf of the bishop and the whole Church and was directly responsible to the bishop in all things. Because of his dependence upon and close co-operation with the bishop, the deacon is often called the "eyes and ears of the bishop."

The works of charity which the deacon performed were integrally tied to his service as co-celebrant at the altar. When he had collected the offerings of the faithful, he chose what was necessary for the Liturgy, and prepared these elements for Communion. All the offerings were collected in the Diaconicon, a separate room near the entrance of the Church where vestments, holy vessels and food were kept. Having completed the preparation of bread and wine for communion, the deacons left the Diaconicon at the proper time and, entering the Church, proceeded to the altar where they presented these gifts to the celebrant as an offering of the people. This is the origin of our Great Entrance.

During the Liturgy, the deacon stood among the faithful as a master of ceremonies, directing them in the proper posture and movements of the service. "Let us bow our heads unto the Lord" and (Lock) "the Doors, the Doors" are examples of this. It was the deacon's job to see that each of the faithful—penitents, children, chanters, servers, widows, virgins, and catechumens—performed his proper service and participated in the Liturgy according to that duty. The deacons also led the people in prayer, asking for the peace of the world, for the union of all and for whatever other petitions the faithful had. In our Liturgy, the litanies (or ektenias)

have become standardized but are still called the Deacon's Litany/Ektenia. Originally these litanies were "made up" by the deacon to express what the real needs of the people were and bring these needs to the Church for all to help. Even today, special petitions are inserted into the litanies for special circumstances or the names of those in need. Because he worked so closely with the faithful and dispensed the charity of the Church, he knew who was sick, who had died, who was travelling and whose crops had failed. Consequently, he prayed for the needs of the people.

One author describes the ministry of the deacon with these words:

"The deacon leads the people in their response to God which, is as the precious oil which causes the lamps of the sanctuary to burn brightly, in the House of the Lord. The deacon is as the hand of the people stretched out to receive the blessing, and as their ear attentive to hear what God the Lord will say, and as their mouth, to answer with them, Amen."

During the Liturgy, the deacon is entirely responsible for the people's actions and his responsibility to lead them by word and gesture, by prayer and petition to the altar in "oneness of mind." The deacon led out those who were not to receive Holy Communion and then locked the doors so none could enter. The deacon also read the Holy Gospel and conducted the Catechumens in and out at the proper time.

Liturgically, it is the deacon's task to bring the people together and unite them in corporate prayer. He may not give a blessing, however. Rather, he leads them to the altar—through their material offerings and in their prayers—so that the celebrant may offer their sacrifice unto God. The deacon also returns these gifts to the people after they have been consecrated to God and blessed by the Holy Spirit in the form of Communion, which the deacon administers, calling all to come forth "with the fear of God and love." At the altar, all his actions are performed in behalf of the faithful and it is precisely his role, as servant to the celebrant and people which makes him the bond of unity between the two. In this way there is not a single act of the Divine Liturgy where the faithful and clergy are not united in a common action.

Because of the deacon's work among the people and his close relationship with the bishop, the deacon stands as a vital link between the clergy and laity. In the

diaconate the charismatic and institutional ministry of the Church is integrally allied to manifest the fullness of the Church. Through this ministry, the idea of service is clearly expressed, as is the principle of hierarchy and the unity of clergy and laity as the royal priesthood of the kingdom of God. It is the diaconate, moreover, which as the ministry for the people of God expresses the incarnate charity and love of the Church and by this charity reminds the Church of Her eschatological dimension. The deacon's office also brings together the social and economic activities of man in the Church so as to transform them and offer them to the glory of God. Finally, the diaconate expresses both the spontaneity and fluidity of the Church's forms as she reaches into the world by drawing from the never-ending riches of Her storehouse of tradition to provide the constantly renewing and personal form necessary to fulfill Her ministry as the Body of Christ.

The entire scope of the deacon's ministry, however, exists only because of his relationship to the bishop. He is not a free agent. Rather his authority comes from the bishop and he may act only in the name of the head of the community, i.e. the bishop (or the priest) and for

the benefit of the community. It is for this reason that the ordination of the deacon follows the Consecration of the Bread and Wine: to show that he does not have the full power of the priesthood and cannot therefore consecrate.

Since the time of the Apostles, it has been the tradition of the Church to have seven deacons in each Church. It later became the practice of the Church to assign as many deacons as were necessary to meet the needs of the people. Today the shortage of priests in the Church in America has caused the necessity of quickly ordaining deacons to the priesthood to fill this shortage. The ministry of the deacon, however, is essential for the well-being of the Church. Indeed because of the decay of the diaconate as a specific ministry [office], many problems have arisen. The lack of unity between clergy and laity, the loss of spontaneity in liturgical worship, and the breakdown of the hierarchical structure of our Church are but a few of the problems which can be traced directly or indirectly to the disappearance of the deacon's ministry.

The Holy Orthodox Church in North America

Altar Servers Conference

August 7-11, 2006 (n.s.)

St. Mark of Ephesus Orthodox Cathedral
850 South Street
Roslindale, MA

St Annas Orthodox Church
852 South Street
Roslindale, MA

Who should attend?

Altar leaders, ecclesiarchs, subdeacons
Coordinators and supervisors of parish altar servers
Young men ages 9 through 18 who are altar servers at their parish
Older men over 18 who serve regularly

How do I register?

Please ask your parish priest for a registration form and get permission from him to attend.
Registration deadline is June 1

Questions or comments?

Please contact Fr. Demetrios Houlares (781) 237-3949
jimhoulares@yahoo.com

Father Alexander 1928–2006

by Father Nicholas

Father Alexander was born Constantine Mikhailovich Troutscheff in Kobe, Japan, in 1928, of Russian émigré parents who had fled the Bolshevik Revolution.

His mother, Catherine, was the first non-Japanese woman to be granted the “Natori” title which allowed her to teach traditional Japanese dance to the Japanese themselves. She was also the first European woman to appear in Japanese cinema. She trained many Japanese dancers and actors.

In 1940 she and her second husband moved to the United States, intending to send for Constantine, his grandmother, and his aunt. The bombing of Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941 and the Second World War prevented this from happening. Constantine never saw his mother again; she died of cancer in Los Angeles in 1949. Thus he was reared by his maternal grandmother, Anna.

In 1939, when Constantine was eleven years old, his grandmother noticed what she thought were the first signs of Hansen’s disease, leprosy. The hardships and deprivations which Constantine and his family endured during the War worsened his condition. When Constantine was seventeen years old he and his grandmother were forced to move to the isolated sanitarium of Kusatsu in the mountains of northwestern Japan. He lived at the leper colony for 56 years in a little cottage built for them by order of Gen. MacArthur.

Although his leprosy was officially cured or arrested in the mid-1950’s, Constantine lived all his life with the ravages of the disease: he lost one leg, his fingers and toes; his eyes were damaged, etc. But the amazing thing was that Constantine never let any of these things get him down or keep him from living his life. He did not grow bitter or withdraw into a shell.

His pious grandmother, Anna, was responsible for helping Constantine to deal with his lot in a Christian manner. She reposed in 1966.

In 1968 Constantine took out Japanese citizenship and received a passport in order to visit his mother’s grave for the first time. While in the United States he also visited several of the monasteries, convents and parishes of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad. We first met him in 1969; he visited again in 1978. Thereafter Constantine would come to the States on an annual spiritual pilgrimage. It was his firm intention to one day become a monk.

When the Japanese Orthodox Church accepted autonomy from the Moscow Patriarchate in 1970, Constantine would have nothing more to do with them. After the repose of Metropolitan Philaret, when the ROCOR Synod began to alter its course, Constantine remained with the clergy and faithful who formed the Holy Orthodox Church in North America.

As Constantine grew older we became concerned over his future: staying alone in his little hut at the sanatorium, with no living relatives left to care for him. We were his only family. Nor could he travel to America as before. A couple of times Fr. Neketas Palassis traveled from Seattle to Japan to bring him Holy Communion.

Eventually Constantine decided that he wanted to move here to Holy Transfiguration

Monastery, so we submitted the necessary immigration papers and received permission to bring him here as a member of our brotherhood. Constantine came here to our monastery in June 2004. During one of his previous visits, in September 1997, he had requested to become a monk and had been tonsured as Fr. Alexander, in honor of St. Alexander Nevsky of Russia.

In the autumn of 2004 it was discovered that Fr.



Father Alexander in his cell with his Japanese cat Haruko asleep on the bookshelf

Alexander had esophageal cancer. Chemotherapy and radiation treatments at the Lahey Clinic brought it under control enough that he was able to fulfill his life-long dream. In September of 2005, accompanied by his novice-attendant George, he participated in our annual pilgrimage to Russia. It was Fr. Alexander's first time in his ancestral native land.

Later it was discovered that the cancer had migrated to Fr. Alexander's liver. There really isn't much that can be done to treat such a condition, and so Fr. Alexander's liver gradually failed. Thank God, he did not experience much pain. He was exhausted most of the time and slept a great deal. He peacefully faded away.

We put a loudspeaker in his room so that Fr. Alexander could listen to the church services; and we took him Holy Communion every day. Two of the brethren were appointed to serve Fr. Alexander, and towards the end one of them was with him at all times. A kind hospice nurse was also advising them on how best to care for him. Our dear Fr. Alexander peacefully reposed in the Lord, on Saturday, January 1/14, soon after having received Holy Communion. One of his cell-attendants was with him at the time.

The funeral was held here at the monastery. As one of our monks commented: Fr. Alexander had spent so many years isolated, without a church or clergy, and now his funeral was served by Metropolitan Ephraim, eleven priests, and two deacons! In all, about 120 people attended. We had the memorial meal here too, and then we buried Fr. Alexander in our own monastic cemetery. Thus we were blessed to take care of him ourselves to the very end.

We are very grateful to God to have known Fr. Alexander and to have had him as our father and brother. We miss him very much. But then, now that he is with the Lord, he is with us at all times and more closely than before.

Please keep him and us in your prayers.

On February 1, we received this e-mail message from Nicholas, one of Fr. Alexander's friends in Japan:

"Fr. Alexander eagerly helped the poor. There was an old woman named Olga Vdovina in Yokohama. She was one of the Russian immigrants that took refuge from the Bolsheviks. Olga was so old and ill in bed. Fr. Alexander cared for her and sold her house to make her safely live in the hospital. He spent much time and money on this. I was too young to comprehend why he did so. But after 25 years, I understand God's reward. Troutscheff was so kindly cared for by good monks and peacefully reposed. Glory to the Highest."

Excerpts from the Eulogy Given by the Elder Panteleimon

We have gathered now to bid farewell for a season to our father, to our brother, Alexander Monk. He had a very endearing quality about himself, nobility and beauty and comeliness of soul. He endeared himself to everyone. I don't think there is anyone who would speak unkindly concerning our Father Alexander. Although he was born and reared outside Russian lands, in his soul he was most Orthodox and most Russian. Throughout the years he would come to visit. We invited him to stay permanently but he was so many years—decades—in the leper colony in Japan, that it was difficult for him to leave. He accepted to become a schema-monk. He always wished to be tonsured. Not knowing when the end would be and how someone would be sent to Japan, on one of his visits he was tonsured.

He belonged to the Japanese Church but once they came in communion with the Soviet Church he ceased all contact with them. He would not receive Holy Communion from them. He was faithful to the testament of the confessing bishops, the catacomb bishops in Russia and the Russian Church Abroad. He was faithful to his confession of the three great hierarchs, Anthony, Anastasy, and Philaret. Because we were affiliated—twenty years we were under the omophorian of Metropolitan Philaret, First Hierarch of the Russian Church Abroad—he felt at home in our monastic community, more so than even in other Russian centers. And when we departed, he immediately saw through the whole situation. He did not hesitate like a few did hesitate in the beginning. He knew that there was already betrayal and he did not leave communion with us. A true confessor in our own times and a mighty example of piety of Orthodoxy for us to imitate. May his blessings be with us.

He reposed on a dominical feast, the eighth day after Nativity, the giving of the name of the Lord Jesus and the Circumcision, and the feast of the holy and great confessor St. Basil. Our Father Alexander is a great investment of our community and of our Church. The fathers that repose in Orthodoxy in our monastery, they are our great investment. We thank our Saviour for this honour to have as a member of our community our Father Alexander, the new confessor. Amen.

Axios!



Fr. Joseph Kamunge Waigi and family. He will serve as priest at St. John of Kronstadt parish in Limuru, Kenya.



Fr. Peter Kanyi Kogi is priest of a little church in Kimondo in the Nyeri district of Kenya. A patron saint for the church has not yet been chosen.



Fr. Joseph Maina and family. He will be priest at St. Cyprian of Carthage parish in Nanyuki, Kenya.



Metropolitan Makarios, Fr. Simon Maina Mutahi and Hierodeacon Barsanuphius in the background. Fr. Simon will serve as priest at the parish of St. Nicholas in Gumba, in the Nyeri district of Kenya.



Deacon David Njenga Gaitho and family. Deacon David will serve at St. John of Kronstadt parish in Limuru, Kenya.

Axios!



Newly ordained Deacon George Sempa Kisomose; his mother, Presbyteria Victoria; Metropolitan Makarios; and Fr. Spiridon Kisomose. Deacon George will be assisting at St. Basil parish in Kiboga, Uganda, where Fr. Spiridon is pastor. Deacon George is also director of children's education at the parish.



Deacon Paul Ssebulolo, Metropolitan Makarios and Fr. Spiridon Kisomose. Deacon Paul will also be serving at the parish of St. Basil in Kiboga.



Fr. Joseph Musoke Kimu, Metropolitan Makarios and newly-ordained Deacon Dimitrius Kabanda. Deacon Dimitrius will be serving with Fr. Joseph at St. Mark of Ephesus parish in the Mityana district of Uganda, (near the parish of St. Menas).



Deacon Nicholas Katamba, Hierodeacon Barsanuphius, Father Spiridon and Deacon Kevin. Deacon Nicholas will assist at St. Catherines parish in Seta, Uganda.

Saint Tatiana Orthodox Mission Chapel

By Hierodeacon John and Dr. Constantine Pandazis

Saint Tatiana Orthodox Mission Chapel had its humble beginnings on Sunday, January 12/25, 1998, in the living room of Dr. Constantine and Mrs. Angela Pandazis, in Astoria, NY, where typica services were held on the Saint's feast day.

Within two weeks of this first service, His Eminence, Metropolitan Ephraim of Boston, directed us to contact Protodeacon Photios Touloumes, who resided on 14th Street in the borough of Manhattan, New York City. Protodeacon Photios requested that we find a saint after whom to name our fledgling parish.

On Sunday February 9/22, 1998, the names of several saints were placed in a box. Dr. Pandazis was out of town on business, and Angela put in the name of St. Tatiana, the Deaconess and Virgin-martyr of Rome, thinking it was her husband's choice. He had actually wanted St. Xenia of Petersburg, the Fool-for-Christ, but St. Tatiana was the name chosen. Deacon Photios insisted that St. Tatiana wanted this parish named after her, thus explaining the mishap.

The mission parish continued at this location until October 1998, whereupon services were held in the living room of Mrs. Cornelia Barloiu.

In early 1999, St. Tatiana Orthodox Mission Chapel found a permanent location when Protodeacon Photios purchased a two-story home in Woodside, NY.

A small parish church occupies the first floor. There are three bedrooms on the second floor. The finished basement is large enough for trapeza and has a small kitchen to prepare food.

But the house, which was built in the 1920's, is in bad repair and requires approximately \$20,000 worth of renovations. This includes a new sidewalk, a new

metal deck in the backyard and new metal doors (what we have now is rusting badly), electrical work, new windows, and a thorough paint job. The parish itself is very small (17 people, including 5 children), and nobody is particularly well off financially.



Parishioners at St. Tatiana Orthodox Chapel, Jan. 23/Feb. 5, 2006

Any donations toward renovations would be greatly appreciated! They can be sent to:

Saint Tatiana Orthodox Mission Chapel
50-40 46 Street,
Woodside, NY 11377

A priest from our diocese serves at St. Tatiana's on a biweekly basis, thus providing the Mysteries for the faithful. On alternate Sundays typica services are performed.

Our beloved Hierodeacon Photios reposed on May 16/29, 2002, the Feast of Mid-Pentecost that year. John Zatonski, who has been our chanter for many years, was recently tonsured and ordained. He now serves the parish as deacon.

Report From Guatemala

By Hieromonk Ignatius



Christina, Tatiana, Iakov, Lucia, Fr. Ignatius, newly-illuminated Despina, Maria, Sophia and Cyril

Please pray for the Holy Theophany Orthodox Mission in Guatemala City, Guatemala. We now have nine people, with five more waiting to be baptized, and with a possibility of over twenty more people in the near future. The current members are all related to Victor Marroquin (a parishioner of St. Cosmas of Aetolia, in Maryland): his mother Xenia; his three sisters Maria, Sophia, and Tatiana; his brother-in-law Cyril; his nieces Lucia and Christina; his nephew Iakov; and newly-baptized Despina who is Iakov's wife. They are all truly faithful people. They do not, as of yet, have a permanent church, but (Lord willing) in the near future they will be able to purchase some land and possibly a building. Currently, reader's services are held on Sundays and major feast days. One incident that showed me their fervency for our Saviour, was when one of them came to me and asked forgiveness for not keeping the correct days of the fasts and feasts last year. I found out later that they had not received a 2005 calendar, so they used the 2004 calendar again. Thus they were able to celebrate the correct feasts and fasts, though not on the correct days. I thought that this showed that with a little help from those of us who can, these fellow Orthodox Christians could be great lights to Guatemala. The country is predominantly Roman Catholic, but in recent years, the Protestants have been making major incursions. The people that I met in Guatemala all seem to have a semblance of piety, though misdirected. With a little help, we could have a prosperous church, witnessing the Orthodox Faith.

Integrating the Marriage Ceremony with Divine Liturgy

Marriage, a perennial problem vis-à-vis society, and its laws were discussed at length during the 2005 Clergy Synaxis. It was reaffirmed that no mixed marriages are allowed in the Church, i.e., a non-Orthodox spouse, or even one that is a catechumen, cannot be married in the Church. In such cases, there can be no doubt that a civil marriage is a valid marriage, as it is witnessed to by the canons of the Church and Byzantine law. It is not considered fornication, but of course, the Orthodox member in such a marriage must serve a rule of repentance. When a couple, or a married person, converts and joins the Church, their marriage is valid if it is in conformance with the civil laws. They are not remarried. Certainly, marriage existed from pagan times and was valid, as it was also in Old Testament times. It is a serious sin, however, for two Orthodox members to be married in a civil ceremony without a church wedding.

The Liturgical Commission was appointed to investigate how to help reduce the indulgence of luxury and vast sums expended on extravagant vanities in many modern marriages. The marital ceremony could be integrated into being served with the Liturgy, as was done anciently and even up to modern times in some areas, so that the ceremony could be served more soberly, in a Christian manner, with a more restrained reception. Several ancient *typica* have been found already.



*The wedding of Alex and Hope Laskowski at Pillars of Orthodoxy Church in Carlisle, PA.
According to the ancient typicon, it was celebrated in the Divine Liturgy.*

Saint Paul's Fellowship of Labor

Excerpts from a letter by Abbess Thecla

As many of you know, the young men and women who have attended St. Xenia's camp from their youth and are now counselors, have of their own accord formed a very enthusiastic group—the St. Paul's Fellowship of Labor. The purpose of this Fellowship, as they have explained it, is twofold. They want to show their commitment to their love for God and His Holy Church by their works, and they feel that one of the best ways to do this is showing their support of the monastic communities. This also allows them to benefit spiritually, reaping the blessings of the monastic lifestyle and services, as well as having time to be together with Orthodox youth. Since they all know how meaningful that week at camp has always been for them, they wanted to create a second opportunity for themselves, as they get older and face greater challenges, to have the support of being with one another in a pious setting.

Last year several young men went to St. Gregory's monastery in Kelseyville and helped the fathers with their construction projects. The following year at camp they gave a presentation about their stay at the Monastery and the work that had been accomplished. The young women then organized themselves and contacted us at the Convent of the Meeting of the Lord, asking if we would be willing to have them come out during their break from school in December. Of course we were very grateful for their offer and more than happy to have them come.

On the morning of December 13/26, Hilarie Snogren and Rebekah Routos from New Hampshire, Alexandra Kukunova from Boston, Nina and Katherine Parr, Jessica Delgado, and Leila George from Portland and Narrisa Maillis from the Bahamas, with the help of their fellow St. Xenia's camper from Seattle, Katelin Kelley, who arranged the airport pickups, all arrived at the Convent ready for work! That day all the hundreds of items in our Quiet Light Gift shop were packed up into boxes and carefully labeled and stored in our garage, so that the shop would be ready for the next step. This was a huge undertaking and never could have been done without the help of so many hands—eleven people worked for twelve hours! The next day our much appreciated crew of supportive gentlemen from St. Nectarios parish—Michael and Cosmas Xenos, James Dimock, Michael Hopke and Daniel Lain—arrived to repair the ceiling, which had been seriously water damaged in several places due to leaks in the roof. They worked hard all day masking, plastering and repainting the ceiling, as well as trimming the skylights, and the shop, our main source of support, is now better than new.

Evenings were spent productively either going to the home of St. Nectarios parishioners James and Photini Dimock to watch the videos on Intelligent Design and then having a discussion group, or staying at the Convent to have talks. On their last evening all together they chose as the topic of their talk “Now that we are old enough to have to choose for ourselves whether or not we are in the Church, what is it that makes us want to be Orthodox?” It was very heart warming and edifying to hear their stories. By the end of the evening it was evident that their various experiences had brought them all to the same conclusion—“The Church is our Life. The only place where we find joy, peace and meaning. Even if I'm not always as good a Christian as I would want to be, I could never imagine my life without the services or the Grace of the Church.”

Our dear Saviour always provides what's needed and this visit was very providential for us as well. Since we are only three sisters and taking care of the services, all the normal routine of the monastic life, a shop and mail order business and ten acres, we're sure you can all imagine what a welcome sight it was to have such a crew of eager, capable and pious helpers. Thank you for all you have done to help them. We pray that all the youth of the St. Paul's Fellowship of Labor and their families, parishes and sponsors will always be richly rewarded by our Saviour, both now and in the age to come.

We ask that you all please continue to remember us in your holy prayers, as we never forget you.

With love and respect in our Merciful Saviour

Mother Thecla and Sisters

**St. Xenia Camp 2006
August 13-19 (n.s.)**

Please visit

**www.homb.org/stxeniacamp
or contact**

Catrin Thorp (617) 327-6204
catrin@homb.org
registrar

Elias Winburne (804) 559-8945
eliaswinburne@msn.com
volunteer recruitment

Dr. Vassily (207) 967-5830
mihailoff@adelphia.net
counselor recruitment

Friends of Ugandan Orphans

3 mile Walk-a-thon

**Artesani Park,
Soldiers Field Rd
Brighton, MA**

**June 10, 2006
10 a.m. – 1 p.m.**

**Complete the course on foot, in your wheelchair
or
Be a sponsor**

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(978) 256-7715**

Last year approximately 40 people walked and \$10,000 has been raised so far. A special thanks to the many donors from across the USA and Canada, and to everyone who helped to make the Walk-a-thon of October 8, 2005 such a success.

Mother Syncretiki of Holy Nativity Convent aided the orphans by raising \$1,000. As she is sent on errands, she finds coins which she deposits in a large plastic coke bottle bank. She tells this

to people visiting the convent, *Participants on the home stretch of the Walk-a-thon, October 8, 2005*

who also contribute coins to her "piggy bank." There are three parishes in Uganda which operate primary and secondary schools. Some of the attendees are very

poor or orphans. Projects have been undertaken to generate

income to assist these needy children with the basics of life and their education needs.

The Metropolis of Boston had been assisting our clergy in Uganda with a stipend, but can no longer afford to do this as the number of clergy is increasing. There are plans to fund projects that gradually will generate enough income for the support of the parishes and



the orphans. The Friends of Ugandan Orphans, a sub-committee of the Missionary Society, is trying to raise funds outside the diocese, so as not to interfere with our own parish needs.

Bread Cast Upon the Waters Returneth A Hundredfold

(Ecclesiastes 11:1)

Many organizations today collect pennies donated by many young people. All these young students get together and comb their homes and neighborhoods for pennies and change. In this way, they have raised thousands of dollars for causes such as cancer, leukemia, etc. This is a very good way for teaching our young children to give alms to other young children who have nothing. Some of these organizations have raised one million pennies and have collected \$10,000.00.

We can do the same. All together we can make a difference by returning empty soda cans and by saving our pennies and/or change. Every little effort on our part makes a big difference for them.

To help our orphans and parishes in Africa, please drop off your pennies and/or change at the Holy Nativity Convent. If you are unable to come to the convent, you can give your donations to Eutychios Kalogerakis (St. Anna's Parish), or to Raphael Mihopoulos (St. Mark's Parish). For faraway parishioners who cannot mail their pennies, please take your pennies to the bank in penny rolls. (The Coinstar machines at supermarkets deduct 10%.)

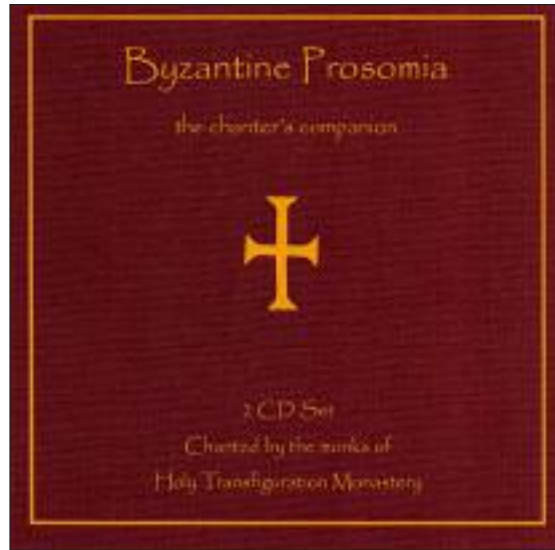
– A Nun of Holy Nativity Convent

The Geriatric Squad of Saint Philaret House



Presbytera Victoria Fleser – Administrative Assistant, Father John Fleser – Treasurer, Metropolitan Ephraim, Father Theodore – Our “Virtual Priest,” Father Athanasius – Printer and Computer Operator

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About Our Logo *A Divine Confirmation*

The cross on our masthead commemorates the miraculous appearance of the sign of the Cross near Athens on Sept. 14 (according to the traditional Orthodox calendar) in 1925. Anti-Orthodox and secularist forces in power in Greece, together with the Ecumenical Patriarchate, had forced the changing of the traditional church calendar in 1924 as a first step toward uniting with the heterodox churches of the West. Shining in the evening sky on the traditional feast day of the Exaltation of the Cross, this extraordinary appearance of the Cross is a divine confirmation of Holy Tradition in the Orthodox Church and of the calendar as one facet of Holy Tradition.

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THE DIOCESE NEEDS SUPPORT

“Every good giving and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights” (James 1:17). The perfect gift is the one that only membership in the Church can give: the knowledge of true worship and the grace of the Holy Mysteries. But our era suffers from a famine of truth and the true worship of God. In our weak way, we try to feed those who hunger for God. Your prayers and your donations help the Church in this awe-inspiring ministry. Another way to help is to make a bequest to the Church in your will. Remember that God loves a cheerful giver. Also remember that *The Faithful Steward*, although delivered free of charge to all members of our Metropolis, is in need of your support.

